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SUCCESS STORY

Amuru District Government Delivers at Patira Primary School



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Patira Primary 7 students pose at the school's inauguration ceremony.



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Anthony Omach, local chairman 5 of Amuru District, speaking at the opening ceremony.

"OTI is meeting the challenge in this transition. They are supporting district priorities, and they are delivering quick impact to the families and children who are returning to their homes."

—Richard Tudwong, Presidential Advisor for northern Uganda

March 2009 – Over the past 20 years, displaced Ugandans have not been able to lead normal lives, and many have relied on services delivered in camps by nongovernmental organizations and other aid providers. As the uprooted people return to their homes, they are hoping that their government will be able to provide many of these community services.

The need for attention is especially acute in the education sector, where community schools are in shambles. Classrooms have little or no furniture, there are no latrines, and teachers live far from the workplace. Fortunately, there is growing recognition of the important role that education—as a fundamental right—plays in reducing conflict and promoting recovery.

Owing to a high rate of returns in Patira in Amuru District, the community and local government prioritized the renovation of the Patira Primary 7 school. And as part of its assistance to Uganda's recovery and development efforts, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) invested \$125,000 in a comprehensive renovation of the school.

The "new" school was inaugurated on March 6 and has become a visible sign that local government officials are working with communities that are willing to participate in the recovery process.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Richard Tudwong, President Yoweri Museveni's Northern Uganda Advisor, said that OTI had proven itself to be the "quickest-acting program in assisting the government to deliver services to its people."

The people of Patira hope the restored school will encourage a large number of children to enroll. In addition, many view the effort as a much-deserved recognition of the school's dedicated, award-winning teachers, who have worked, taught, and mentored against the odds in a situation where more than 600 students were registered at a school with no roof, no cooking facilities, and no staff housing.

Since the renovation was completed, Patira Primary 7 has been designated a pilot school that can serve as a model for other schools in the district.